

### Memories of Cookeville

To the Herald and its Many Readers: I am not a regular correspondent to the Herald but only drop in a few lines occasionally. We are always glad to get the paper and with haste begin to peruse its contents, which always contains so many nice interesting letters from different sections with the general news of the country. We get to hear from a great many of our old acquaintances and kindred that we would not otherwise. Best wishes for the Herald and its success.

Well, we are now located at Cookeville, Tennessee, once more in this life, the home of my childhood days, while there has been so many changes taken place since my return, but it still feels to me like old home, sweet home.

My father, who is still living and is now 92 years old and almost blind, totters upon his staff as he walks, and brother W. D. and dear old mother who is gone that constituted our family.

There are but a few people living here now who were here when I first lived here, and most of them, now you might say, are old folks as their heads have silvered over with gray hairs which teach us that old age is sure to come to us all and we should begin to make preparations to live in the bright beyond.

As I look around over my old play grounds when but a child and see the homes of my schoolmates and playmates I cannot help but think what changes time will bring about. I see here and there an old building, but mostly all new buildings. The land has most all been cleared up and beautiful houses have been built.

Old Washington Academy, the old brick structure, where I used to attend school, brings a bright spot to my memory, has all been cleared away and a large college or building erected in its stead with its six or seven hundred pupils when it only averaged about one to two hundred. Seeing so many boys and girls playing and skipping about over the play grounds enjoying themselves I can but wish that I was yet a school boy.

Just beyond the college at or near the branch where the roller mill now stands was a small log hut and a black-smith shop. All the space or ground between the college and log house was covered with scrub timber and chinquapin bushes, and when going to school several of us school children would go out there at play time and gather chinquapins.

And just down the branch from the roller mill a little ways was a swamp of low brush and vines

and thousands of "muskadines" grew there and quite a number of us would go there at play time and gather those grapes to eat. Now the swamp has been cleared up and nice houses built all along where we used to gather grapes. Also a depot and quite a nice town has been built and done away with our old chinquapin patches.

When I was a school boy the town only afforded one church, an old frame building, which stood just south of the public square on the right of the Sparta pike. It was owned and built by the M. E. Church, South, where I can well remember attending church when a boy and must say that it was quite different then than now. All denominations used and occupied the old building and would meet together and carry on or engage in a union meeting, all working together in harmony in the bonds of peace and love; love to God and to one another, and would have some of the greatest revivals, the old time Holy Ghost kind.

But now as I look around over town I see a fine brick mansion built by the Methodist people; another fine brick building built by the U. S. A. Presbyterian people, another handsome brick building built by the Christian people, a nice frame building built by the Cumberland Presbyterian people and a nice frame building near the depot built by the Baptists. Each one having a separate place to worship God—I do trust.

The house where I was reared and called home was a two-story frame building south of the courthouse, facing the square, one among the first frame buildings built in Cookeville, of which I have the picture on a tin plate, is now gone and quite a large brick store-house or houses occupying the place. The garden that my parents owned and raised so many various kinds of vegetables has changed hands and now occupied by a large frame building known as the Richelieu Hotel. I can't help saying, oh! what changes have taken place since I was a boy.

In conclusion I wish to know how many of my old schoolmates are yet living and remember going to school at old Washington Academy when Profs. Finny and John G. Stewart taught school. Will you please drop me a post-card that I may know how many are living; who you are and where you live.

May the Lord bless you all is the prayer of your friend and old schoolmate.

BENJAMIN F. SLOAN.

The Cookeville Fair will be held Sept. 7, 8 and 9 this year, earlier than usual.

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